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FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

The Geography of the Pacific

Geology of the Pacific

Origin and development of the Pacific

History of the Pacific

Geography of the Pacific, in the Pacific Ocean

and in the Pacific Ocean

Volume II

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A Proposed Religion Education Curriculum

for a Graduate School in Religion



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C O N T E N T S

FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

The Geography of the Gospels

Dorothy Soper Gabrielson

Origin and Development of Sacramentalism

Shigemi Kega

Immortality in Plato, in the New Testament,  
and in Modern Christian Thought

Stavros A. Lazarides

A Proposed Religious Education Curriculum  
for a Girls' High School in Japan

Kaoru Mikami

Submitted to the Department of  
Religion  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts  
in the  
Pacific School of Religion  
1932



THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE GOSPELS

By

Dorothy Soper Gabrielson

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Thesis

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## LIST OF ABBRIVIATIONS

A.J.A., American Journal of Archaeology.  
A.S.O.R., American Schools of Oriental Research Bulletin.  
C.C.M., Chester Charlton McCown.  
D.C.G., Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels.  
Ency. Bib., Encyclopedia Biblica.  
G.A.S., George Adam Smith.  
H.D.B., Hastings Dictionary of the Bible.  
H.G.H.L., Historical Geography of the Holy Land.  
I.S.B.E., International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.  
J.P.O.S., Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society.  
J.Q.R., Jewish Quarterly Review.  
P.E.F., Palestine Exploration Fund.  
P.S.B., Problem of the Site of Bethsaida.  
Q.S., Quarterly Statement. (P.E.F.)

Note:- Titles of all other abbreviations can be ascertained  
from the bibliography.











## CHAPTER I

## Introduction

It would seem, when the student starts out to make a bibliography for gospel geography, that the critical scholar has either carefully evaded that field on the whole, or just has not been interested in it. However, as I conceive of the problem it is one of vast importance: important to the critical scholar, the teacher, and to the ordinary layman. In fact, with so much actually false material sent out for the use of the church teacher it is absolutely imperative that she, or he, should be as well informed upon the subject as possible so that there may be no danger of teaching to children, or young people, that which may have to be unlearned later or may become an hindrance in their religious growth. Few teachers in fewer churches are competent or critical enough to select that which is historically defensible from that which has no basis in fact even though it has been accepted by laymen for generations. We cannot, for example, as was once done, and is still being done, lay down a definite geographical outline of Jesus' travels, and the unwary teacher who attempts it finds pitfalls ready for her daring feet. What can be done? Is geography important? Let me answer the second question first. Geography is quite as important as any other phase of New Testament study for it helps to place the historical Jesus in a setting that is real. Without knowing the Jews we cannot truly understand the stories and the life of Jesus of Nazareth. A knowledge of geography is one of the keys with which to open the door



to understanding that peculiar people--the people of Palestine. The qualities of these people are the qualities of the land which has nurtured them for so many generations upon generations. The subject broadens even as we discuss it. However, I shall speak but briefly about geography in general so that I may speak at more length upon that of New Testament times and the geography of the Synoptic Gospels in particular.

How can the average church teacher safely teach gospel geography? That is a question that is before us today. Upon looking at a chart of some sixty years ago I discovered that the "cover to cover" Fundamentalist had his troubles--and they were no light ones! Only his sublime ignorance of critical evaluation and his evident lack of a sense of humor saved him from great uneasiness of mind. On the other hand another chart, also Fundamentalist I believe, seemed more nearly upon the right track. This geographical chart did not seek to outline exactly the journeys of Jesus of Nazareth but it did name, and locate as near as possible, the places Jesus visited. Each one was treated, in most instances, as a separate unit, its place being chosen on the chart not because it was the third, or fourth or fifth place Jesus visited, but because it happened to have been mentioned next by Matthew, Mark or Luke. The distinction may seem slight but it is a real and an important one. The whole emphasis is different. No attempt is made at a specific chronological order though a logical order is attempted. The emphasis is rather upon the place and its location upon the map of Palestine than upon the date of Jesus' journey





there. This seems much the more defensible arrangement of the material. The synoptics vary so greatly as to the order in which he visited the various vilages, that no clear outline can be made. It is even difficult to try to make a critical outline of his travels using only one of the gospels! And then if we cannot now locate definitely even such important sites as Capernaum and Bethsaida how can we successfully plot the journeys of Jesus?

The problems facing the critical student in the field of Bible geography are indeed legion. Rather than seek to harmonize, the student must seek to separate each gospel, each verse, and each tradition; putting them in their several compartments and then examining each in turn. Only after this has been carefully, I almost wrote, prayerfully, done can the student begin to re-group the component parts into harmonious or at least homogenous groupings. And then what happens? Too often group number One flatly contradicts group number Two! Traditions given voice by Luke cannot be found in Mark, or data in Matthew makes it impossible that both Matthew and Mark are right.

With this in mind the student must seek to interpret the data in the light of modern research and modern knowledge. Each written source must be studied from the view point of, "why, when and how was it written?" This is not the end, by any means. Then these questions have been answered by means of any contemporary material available then the student must compare his findings with facts attested to by the very topography of the landscape. With all this



one must not only apply all the scholarly knowledge he possesses but he must temper it all with logical thinking and common sense.



## CHAPTER II

## Geography and Climate of Palestine

The peculiar physical conditions of Palestine shaped not only its early history but also had a most remarkable affect upon its religion and upon the very nature of its peoples. This land, whose importance bulks so large, is really very small as compared with our own United States. Its approximate width is about one hundred miles and its length from north to south surely not much more than one hundred and fifty miles. To make a comparison, therefore, we may say that it is about the size of the state of Vermont.<sup>1</sup> But with the similarity of size all other similarity ceases---or so I should judge from the descriptions of Palestine which I have to take from others, and my knowledge of Vermont, which comes from personal observation. Vermont's green and gently rolling hills and many little lakes do not seem in harmony with the coastal plains, rugged inland valleys, elevated plateaus and the "deep, hot gorges"<sup>2</sup> of the Palestine of Kent and Sir George Adam Smith.

The land of the Jew is a land of strange contrasts, a land of mountain and plain; desert and sown; dense population crowded into unsanitary villages and large uninhabited areas given over to the limestone, which is everywhere, and exquisite flowers which in the spring prove that even the desert can blossom like the rose. But with all this contrast there is yet nothing gentle and rolling in Palestine, the one word that best describes its topography is "rugged." All generalizations are false: there may be here and there a plain





that is rolling or a hill whose **slope** might be termed gentle but these are not terms that may be applied to Palestine as a whole.

The tree main divisions of Palestine: Judea, Samaria and Galilee have each their own peculiar geographical features. Judea, the most southerly, is an isolated<sup>3</sup> plateau with a wilderness to the east, desert to the south and Shephelah to the west. Furthermore the descent from the plateau is sharp,--anyone making the journey from Jerusalem to Jericho goes from an elevation of 2593 feet to 820 feet below sea level. It was indeed "down to Jericho." The defiles or gorges--or better yet "wadis,"\* since that is a term peculiar to that type of conformation found in Palestine--are exceedingly rough and deep as they near the Dead Sea.

There is however, another way of marking off the geographical divisions of Palestine, that is:--from west to east. In this order we may name the coast, the Shephelah, the plateau west of the Jordan, the Jordan valley, and the Transjordan plateau.<sup>4</sup>

The coast itself has three distinct aspects:- (1) to the north of the cape called Ras-en-Naqurah the mountains being higher and closer to the sea give no room for plains. But the shoreline offers bays and roadsteads suitable for the building of harbors. (2) From Ras-en-Naqurah to Carmel is a transitional region. The mountains are further from the coast and a little coastal plain extends along the shores which are almost everywhere sand. (3) South of Carmel the coast becomes almost a straight line. Marin<sup>e</sup>/pursuits are



few but the vast and fertile plains of Sharon and Philistia are fine for agriculture.

The second grand division ~~is~~ the Shephelah, that strange region between the maritime plain and the Judean plateau. Sir George Adam Smith calls it the "famous theater of the history of Palestine."<sup>5</sup> It is a region of low hills and flat valley land characteristic of this part of Palestine. The prevailing scenery is of short, steep hillsides and narrow glens, with a very few great trees, and thickly covered by brush wood and scrub-oak. Caves, of course are found in plenty. Near the villages there are large dens for both men and cattle, but in the ravines and defiles they are hidden by overhanging brush. This is indeed just the sort of country for "strong border-men like Samson."<sup>6</sup>

Many and fierce are the battles which have been fought over these hills though they did resemble guerilla warfare more than pitched battles. Naturally it was in the wide valleys that most of these battles took place. There are five important valleys--each leading directly through the tangle of Shephelah hills straight to Jerusalem on the one end and to one of the fine cities of the Philistines on the other. Briefly these five valleys were:-(1) Ajalon, a broad fertile plain in the north, the easiest passage from the coast to Jerusalem. (2) Valley of Soreck or the Wady es-Surar. (3) Wady es-Sunt. (4) Wady el-Afranji, contains the real capital of the Shephelah, the present Beit-Jibrin. This is not a place of any natural strength but it is the converging point of many roads.





(5) Wady el-Hesi. This famous Wady contains Lachish, a site which because of its position must always play second fiddle to Gaza.<sup>7</sup>

The third great division of the "Cis-Jordan" plateau which is in turn divided from west to east by a wide and deep plain, the plain of Esdraelon, which constitutes a line of communication between the coast and the deep Jordan valley.

(1) The mountainous region north of this plain varies greatly in elevation. This is Galilee, remarkable for its abundance of springs. Sir George calls it "this smiling country."

(2) The plain itself is the strategic key of Palestine. Here or in its neighborhood were fought most of the great battles for the possession of the country. Here it was that all roads met and crossed. This broad plain, driven like a wedge through the mountain system, has always been the chief highway to the interior. Remembering that it is the proverbial battlefield of Palestine one can well understand how the Seer of Patmos located here the last great battle at Har-Magedon.<sup>8</sup> (3) South of the valley of Esdraelon is the district called at one time the hill-country of Ephraim and Judah. Judea and Samaria, halves of the same mountain range yet how opposite their characters! "The northern half (Samaria) is as fair and open as the southern (Judea) is secluded and austere."<sup>9</sup> Samaria is broken up into more or less isolated groups of hills, yet when viewed from the distance she seems like a single mountain. This indeed was the reason for the early name of "Mount" Ephraim. But she was not an inaccessible fastness like Judea, in fact the openness of Samaria is her most prominent feature.



The history of Samaria has reflected this characteristic for no invaders were successfully stopped and this district often changed hands. Samaria encouraged the foreigners and readily took up their ways. Not so, Judea. This region has a vastly different history and a distinctive geographical development. Streams are rare and usually dry. There are few trees, naturally, and the slope which goes down to the Jordan is wild and sparsely inhabited. This eastern slope is the renowned Wilderness of Judea, a region which has played a large part in the history of Israel as "the refuge of political fugitives and religious solitaries."<sup>10</sup> It was a wild, desolate region and still is today.

The important towns are situated on the ridge of the plateau:- Bethel, Schechem, Jerusalem<sup>m</sup>, Bethlehem and Hebron. The reasons for this are two. First, the western slope being seamed by many deep gorges as it runs into the Shephelah, the main road of the district must follow the line of the watershed, and second, cities on the ridge were much more easily fortified, much more defensible, than those nearer the plain.

Seen from the coast plain, these Judean mountains look like an impregnable wall, stretching continuously from north to south; and when we scale this wall and stand in Jerusalem, another wall stretches before us--the "Mountains of Moab" which are not really mountains but the edge of a lofty plateau.<sup>11</sup> However, between the Judean and the Transjordan plateau lies our next division, the famous valley of the Jordan. This well known river valley is below sea-level



for most of its length, and that length stretches from the Lebanons to the Dead Sea. Sir George Adam Smith divides this into six sections:—"the valley between the Lebanons; the Upper Jordan, from its sources at the foot of Hermon to the Lake of Galilee; this Lake itself; the Lower Jordan to its mouth at Jericho; the Dead Sea; and, thence to the Gulf of Akaba, the Wady Arabah."<sup>12</sup>

These divisions do not at this time need separate study though they deserve general mention. The sources of the Jordan are in a limestone hill country, this gives way around Lake Huleh to marshy land and this in turn to fertile slopes around Lake Tiberias. Josephus especially praises this part of the Jordan valley. Below this point however the aspect of the country abruptly changes. Now the climate becomes tropical and the bird, animal, and plant life is such as is found in Egypt and the Indies. In spite of this the Jordan plain itself is a desert. The river cannot be used for irrigation because it is below the level of the plain and below its ancient river bed.

We are ready now to speak of the most easterly of the geographical divisions, the "Mountains of Moab," or Trans-jordania, a vast plateau remarkable for the abundance of its streams. These streams in their rapid course to the Jordan and the Dead Sea cut deep gulches in the limestone. There are three main streams; the Yarmuk, the Jabbok and the Arnon; the first named forming a natural geological and geographical dividing line.<sup>13</sup>

1- The nature of the country to the north of the Yarmuk





is essentially volcanic. The Hauran and Golan, and immense plain is a great granary for the whole country, for its soil composed of disintegrated volcanic debris, is excellent for the growing of wheat.

2- South of the river is the country once called Gilead. The soil here is no longer volcanic but there is a great abundance of water as mentioned above and this produces rich vegetation. In places this region is well wooded, though much of the country is pre-eminently fitted for pasture-land. However, south of the Jabbok the ridges and forests alike diminish till by the north end of the Dead Sea the country assumes the form of an almost absolutely treeless plateau. Sir George feels that there is enough differentiation of physical characteristics to divide Eastern<sup>n</sup> Palestine into three provinces using the three largest rivers as boundaries. This may be safely done, I believe. Indeed a separation of this greatly diversified country into only two parts may be too much of a generalization. However, such a generalization can be defended.

No mention has yet been made of that so important southern border, the desert, or Negeb. No study of the geography of Palestine would be complete without a discussion of its contribution. South of Beersheba and Wad es-Seba lie sixty miles of wild, bare, mountain country, almost impassable and inhabited by the most untamed of Ishmaelites.<sup>14</sup> The hill country immediately to the south of Judah is fairly fertile but further to the southward the dryness and barrenness begin and from there to the great desert of Tih it is indeed desolate. The Negeb



has been an effective barrier for armies seeking to invade Judea but to the predatory Bedouin this was just the sort of frontier he liked best. He could make quick sallies in upon the villages and then quickly out again into those desert wastes where no town dweller could hope to find him.

Let us turn now to a contemplation of the climate of Palestine. In a country of so varied an aspect it is but natural that the climate should display many local varieties. All possible temperature from a cold, almost arctic, to a heat little short of torrid can be experienced within the compass of half a year.<sup>15</sup> On the whole, however, the climate is agreeable. The year can be divided naturally into two seasons; the rainy and the dry. The summer heat is oppressive only for a few days at a time when a dry wind blows from the eastern desert.<sup>16</sup> For most of the season a moisture-laden sea breeze (rising about ten o'clock in the morning) blows till the evening, and fertilizes the western slopes. In the bare deserts the difference between 90 degrees Fahrenheit by day and 40 degrees Fahrenheit by night gives a refreshing coldness. In winter the snow some times lies for days on the watershed ridges but in summer even Mount Hermon is sometimes quite bare of snow at 9,000 feet above the sea. Conder remarks, "There is perhaps no country in which such a range of climate can be found, from the alpine to the tropical."<sup>17</sup> But we of California find much that can be paralleled in the geography and climates of Palestine and California respectively.

Climate and geography cannot be separated from each other in any study of conditions in any country. Furthermore,



"climate and religion are much more intimately connected than we are accustomed to acknowledge. Primitive man joined nature and religion in a fashion that the most fanatical of modern pantheists has out grown."<sup>18</sup> A purely mechanical conception of nature as something certain and inevitable, whose processes are more or less under man's control, is impossible. In the Palestinian year there is no inevitableness. The climate of Palestine is regular enough to provoke men to methodical labor for its fruits, but the regularity is often interrupted. Thus the imagination is roused to feel the presence of a Will behind nature, in the face of whose interruptions of the fruitfulness or stability of the land man is absolutely helpless.<sup>19</sup> The changing climate created, or at least deepened that sense of dependence felt by all primitive peoples for a governing force. No country can claim credit for its civilization as its very own apart from its surroundings. The effect of environment is a foremost factor in the growth and development of all human attainments.<sup>20</sup> Both internal influences and external forces contribute to the final result. Without doubt the Jews were influenced by the wave after wave of culture that flowed around and through Palestine, but it is also permissible to state that these foreign cultures coming into contact with life as it was lived in Palestine, in such a climate and under such geographic conditions, was modified to suit the environment.

Thus, in understanding the climatic and geographical situation the student may go far in comprehending the culture or cultures of any particular civilization.





There are three principles to be followed in estimating the effects of climate on religion and morals. First, consideration must be given to the direct effect of climate upon physical and mental vigor and upon the capacity for thought and invention; second, to the influence of climate upon the fertility of the soil and the productivity of human labor. This conditions the character of the civilization which in turn determines the character of the people and their ideals. The third must be an attempt to reckon with the ideas and emotions aroused in the mind of primitive man by the natural phenomena of all sorts which he witnessed. Upon his interpretations depends many of his ideals and much of his cultural advance.<sup>21</sup>

Considering these things and the general idea of the geography of Palestine presented in the earlier part of this chapter, may we not see with clearness how great a determining factor was geography and climate in Israel's development? We do not need to go to the length to which Ellsworth Huntington has gone. Neither do we need to deny what is so apparent a contributing factor. Upon the social structure of the Hebrew people the vagaries of their climate exercised a far-reaching influence. How far-reaching and how strong it is difficult to determine with any amount of exactitude. Life was hard in Palestine and it offered few compensations, for wealth was an ephemeral thing--here today and gone tomorrow, where rains came too early--or too late. In spite of this, however, the Jew developed an adaptable mind. A mind which took cognizance of all the contrasts and contra-



dictions about it, assimilated them and then in direct simple language wrote down a set of moral, ethical and religious principles far in advance of any other country, no matter how beautiful or geographically desirable that country might be.



## NOTES ON CHAPTER II

- 1- Kent, C.F., B.G.H., p. 13f.
- 2- Ibid., p. 15.
- 3- Huntington, E., P.T., p.7.
- \*- The correct plural of "Wady" is "Auwad."
- 4- Part of the following discussion is from Lods' "Israel," p.22f.
- 5- G.A.S., H.G.H.L., p. 201.
- 6- Ibid., p. 209.
- 7- Ibid., p. 234.
- 8- C.C.M., G.S.G., p. 62; cf. G.A.S., H.G.H.L., p. 409.
- 9- G.A.S., H.G.H.L., p. 323.
- 10- Ibid., p. 316.
- 11- Macallister, G.C.P., p. 7.
- 12- G.A.S., H.G.H.L., p. 471.
- 13- Ibid., p. 452.
- 14- C.C.M., G.S.G., p. 68.
- 15- Macallister, H.C.P., p. 7.
- 16- Conder, "Palestine," p. 2209, I.S.B.E.
- 17- Ibid.
- 18- C.C.M., "Climate and Religion in Palestine," J.R., Oct.'27, p.521.
- 19- G.A.S., H.G.H.L., p. 73.
- 20- Knight, "Nile and Jordan," reviewed by J. Hoschander,  
J.Q.R., July, 1924.
- 21- C.C.M., "Climate and Religion in Palestine," J.R., Oct. 1927.





## CHAPTER III

Geographical Relationships and their influence  
on Hebrew Life and Religion.

No people may claim full credit for the civilization of their country as being its very own without being indebted in some measure for its acquisition to its surroundings.<sup>1</sup>

The effect of the environment is a foremost factor in the growth and development of all human attainments. And unless there is incontrovertible evidence that from its infancy the civilization of any particular country had been cut off from the rest of mankind such a claim would be impossible. Indeed, "we may even question the reality of internal development, as the contributory forces of the surroundings unceasingly exert their influences so that scarcely any achievement can be effected totally unaided by external conditions."<sup>2</sup>

It is due to these forces that the drawing of a hard and fast line between achievements, or results, which owe their existence to external or foreign influences and those which may be attributed to internal development is almost impossible. Therefore any claim that a certain civilization is indebted for its origin or development to foreign influences alone, or to the influence of internal conditions alone cannot be substantiated. There is in every situation a great exchange and inter-modification of influences. This holds especially true of Palestine and though in our study of geography and social conditions we lean largely to the side of internal modifications we must not lose sight of that other province.

Due to the geographical position of the country the people of Palestine must have been exposed to foreign influ-



ence and there was scarcely room for an independant development of the civilization and of course the religion without this influence leaving its mark. This is but natural, though Huntington would rather have us think of the religion of the Jews as coming almost entirely from that stern Judean plateau isolated from the rest of the world through physical, geographical conditions and social customs. In this, I believe he goes too far though there is something distinctly fascinating about his theories--so much so that I am loth to agree with those who try to entirely discredit his ideas. However that may be, he is apt to lay too much stress on the "pulsating climatic changes" and too little upon the situation of Palestine as a battle ground for the Babylonians, Egyptians, Hittites and even Aryans in his estimation of the reasons for the peculiar nature and religion of the Jews. Thus, one of the most important relationships to be thought of in connection with our topic is the geographical relations between Palestine and her neighbors.

To-day Palestine is isolated and were it not for the sacred places to be found there, the travelling world would pass it by. Yet in the past this was not the case. Then it was that this land was the center of a great culture. Oswald Spengler<sup>3</sup> has an eightfold view of culture--or rather an eight period view. "The history of mankind," he says, "numbers eight high cultures:- the Babylonian, Egyptian, Indian, Chinese, Mexican, Classic, Western and Arabian." The last three<sup>4</sup> are closely connected with Judaism and it was in this last named period that it flourished, i.e.



from 0-1000 A.D. It is to this Arabian culture that we owe Parsism, Chaldaism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam and it was certainly during the growth and flux of this culture that Palestine was far from being an isolated country.

It was, indeed, a great commercial highway connecting as it did Africa and Asia. "The oldest road in the world runs from Kantarah on the Isthmus of Suez to Gaza."<sup>5</sup> I need not here recount for you the old trade routes of the various peoples whose laden caravans crossed Palestine from every accessible direction. The southern route, the great main artery which led to Egypt, lay, to use the phraseology of Grant, "across the shoulders and down one side of the Holy land."<sup>6</sup> In order to picture a people isolated in their thinking from such a close touch with other countries we must perforce imagine the most extreme form of national exclusiveness. Only an almost unthinkably obdurate tenacity must be imagined if we are to think of the Jews as not sharing fully in the common economic and cultural life of the peoples who travelled over their rocky roads. Surely they did share in each successive wave of culture.

The proximity of Egypt and Canaan rendered a continual contact between them almost unavoidable, even in the earliest period, and the influence of the former on the latter ought to have been of a decidedly pronounced character and of lasting impression. However, commercial intercourse and Egyptian campaigns in this region might readily account for the various Egyptian objects discovered through archaeological excavations. Still, it seems hardly possible that





the culture and religion would not have been deeply affected by the contact with an admittedly superior civilization, even more than we now have direct evidence for.

By virtue of its position, Palestine was an indispensable link in the chain which united the great civilized states but this was not entirely to her advantage. As these competing countries became populous, rich and desirable they aroused the greed of conquerors. Meek little Palestine was the battle ground where many wars of possession and dispossession were fought. This was not nearly as bad as when the time came when Palestine herself was a desirable morsel for those whose eyes turned to conquest. Then in truth did she become a battle ground in another sense.

"So many battles have been fought on its soil and especially upon the Plain of Esdraelon, where Carmel thrusts a natural barrier across the path from north to south, that one can well understand how the Seer of Patmos, remembering his native land, located the last great battle at Har-Magedon."<sup>7</sup>

But although the land of the Hebrews, by reason of its geographical position, was drawn into the main stream of Oriental civilization, none the less it secured to the Jews, or rather, to some of the Jews, a relative isolation. In fact, the great highways (which I have barely mentioned since I feel that it is not the province of this paper to go into that very deeply) left outside their system large tracts of country--such as the hill country of Ephraim and Judah and the land of Gilead. It was in these districts, on the margins of the great streams of civilization, that



the Jews gathered themselves into compact units and then into states. It was because of this that there could arise in Judah a society whose ideal was to shut itself off from all intercourse with the outside world.

Now let us look at a new development. With this gradual withdrawing especially on the Judean plateau another thing happened. This was almost an inevitable result of the physical characteristics of the country--the population became separated into a certain number of regional groups each having its peculiar interests and distinct mode of life. These groups were divided by natural formations, and in the discussion of this regional culture I shall follow in general Dr. McCown's handling of the subject in Chapter two, section six of "The Genesis of the Social Gospel" combined with Adolph Lods' outline of the problem.<sup>8</sup>

Palestine is divided into four parallel zones:- the coast, the plateau west of the Jordan, the Jordan Valley, and the Transjordan plateau.

I- The Coast itself has three distinct aspects:- (1) On that part of the coast north of Ras en-Naqurah where the rocky shoreline offers bays and roadsteads suitable for the building of harbors, lived that part of the population which naturally acquired the mode of life of sea-farers and traders. Tyre was located here. (2) From Ras en-Naqurah to Carmel is a transitional region. The mountains are further from the coast. (3) South of Carmel the coast becomes almost a straight line. This offers little encouragement to marine pursuits but the plains of Sharon and Philistia are fine for agriculture.



Since a great highway passed thru this region from Egypt to Syria fortified trading cities grew up here.

II- The Jordan Plateau is divided from west to east by a wide deep plain, the valley of Megiddo, and is divided into three zones:- (1) The mountainous region to the north--Galilee. This part was cut off from the main Israelite body by the plain of Megiddo or Esdraelon; (2) The Plain of Esdraelon--that great plain where trade and military routes passed each other, around whose edges were strongly fortified cities; (3) The Plateau or hill country where owing to the soil and the isolated character of these hills the greater part of the inhabitants depend upon agriculture for a living. Cereals, vines and olives are the staple products.

III- Valley of the Jordan. This region in the time of Jesus supported a large population of fishermen and peasants. It is not necessary to enlarge upon its other features which are well known.

IV- Transjordan. This section is a vast plateau remarkable for the abundance of its streams which in their rapid course to the Jordan and Dead Sea cut deep ravines in the limestone. Geologically and geographically this region falls into clearly marked divisions, of which the river Jarmuk forms the dividing line. (1) The nature of the country to the north is essentially volcanic. It contains an immense plain (Golan) (Hauran) whose soil is formed of disintegrated volcanic debris and which is therefore a fine wheat growing land. The Israelites never gained a permanent footing here. (2) The region to the south of the river possesses soil which





is no longer volcanic but the abundance of water produces a much richer vegetation than is found on the Judean plateau. Arable country abounds. But there were two occupations pre-eminently characteristic of the people of Transjordan, these were cattle-breeding and the struggle with the nomads. In comparison with the region of which we have just spoken, the strip of country here fit for occupation is three or four times less and is closely hemmed in by the desert.

With this brief outline before our mind's eye it is not difficult to see how the people of Palestine must have naturally tended to separate into regional groups with divergent interests, and a difference in economic standards.

When we think of the size alone it is hard to imagine so much hatred, based primarily on ignorance of each other, encompassed in one small country. But when we understand these geographic relationships which served to separate people from people and neighbor from neighbor, we can then begin to see how Samaritans could have no dealings with the Jews even though they lived in each other's back yard. Is it not strange that from that land of animosity and hate should come the world's undying example of a great Love!

Today we know that to understand and appreciate a culture different from our own is to lay the foundation of friendship and mutual respect. We see this shown forth every day in our studies of race cultures, comparative religion and so forth.

But there was no sympathetic understanding between the regional groups of Palestine. In the first place there was



no one central need for uniting all the people. They were not a geographical unit as we have seen--far from it! They were not a cultural unit. This, too, we have seen since some lived on the coast, close to the trading cities where foreign influences were felt the most. Others, living on the more or less inaccessible plateau looked in upon themselves and found the basis for their standards there. Furthermore, the inhabitants of the cities on the inland trade route received a different type of modification from external forces than did those on the Maritime plain. Likewise, they were not a political unit. Circumstances which drove other countries to build up a central government were lacking in Palestine.

Geographical relationships which forced other peoples to unite for protection in other lands served as barriers in Palestine. Therefore, with neither cultural, political nor geographical unity what could be expected of the Jews except wars and hates? There are other things which naturally follow, of course, and can also be traced, in part at least, to geographic causes--a lack of unity of economic standards, racial characteristics and to some extent language usage. The economical differences may be laid directly at the door of geographic position.

Though the Israelites gradually advanced from tent to house, from clan to fortified city at heart they remained unchangeable nomads.<sup>9</sup> From their primitive mode of life they derived an invincible tendency to individualism, to segregate themselves in groups and to develop personality within the group. Even when they had settled, in the mountains of



Transjordan, for example, they could still maintain their detachment; the clan or the tribe being merely replaced by the town, the village or the district. Such, indeed, was the state of the Canaanites, and for centuries continued to be the state of the Israelites. What may have been inbred in the very nature of the Hebrew was fostered by the character of the country in which he settled.

I doubt if we can satisfactorily stop here without mentioning the fact that still today the Jew is a nomad. He is a man without a country, and wherever he goes he separates himself from the large group to build within it a smaller nucleus of his own. The Jew is found in every country in the world yet everywhere he is unmistakeably a Jew. He presents to us a paradox for he is adaptable yet changeless, he is at home anywhere yet can call no land his home, for "Palestine, formed as it is, and surrounded as it is, is emphatically a land of tribes. The idea that it can ever belong to one nation, even though this were the Jews, is contrary to nature."<sup>10</sup>





## NOTES ON CHAPTER III

- 1- Knight, "Nile and Jordan" reviewed by Hoschander, J.Q.R., J1. 1924.
- 2- Ibid,
- 3- Hoschander "Survey of Bib. Lit." J.Q.R., Oct. 1926, p. 255.
- 4- Spengler gives these the names Apolinian, Faustinian and Magian respectively.
- 5- C.C.M., G.S.G., p. 62.
- 6- Grant, E., E.B.G., p. 25.
- 7- C.C.M., G.S.G., p. 62.
- 8- Lods, "Israel," p. 22; and C.C.M., G.S.G., Chapter II, section VI.
- 9- Henri Berr in his foreward to Lods, "Israel."
- 10- G.A.S., H.G.H.L., p. 59.



## CHAPTER IV

A Brief Survey of the History of Archaeology  
in Palestine

Palestine became the object of most general interest earlier than any other Oriental country. It was known to Christendom from its earliest days as the "Holy Land." Nevertheless Palestine research is very new and systematic exploration of the land in all its aspects cannot be said to have truly begun before the foundation of Palestine Exploration Fund in 1865. Before this time most visits to the Holy Land had been more or less considered as a religious performance. This may possibly be much too strong a statement. Certainly Thomas shaw in 1722, the first "true scientific explorer" and Bishop Pococke in 1738 were both trained men and free from traditions which would limit their approach to the problem. Going further back we find pilgrims and crusaders:- for the most part totally unscientific and quite inaccurate.

However, in spite of the apparent mistakes of these early travellers their observations have been valuable as guide posts of a sort for present day archaeologists. Much direct information has come from them concerning Ancient Palestine which when it has been carefully sifted has been absolutely essential to the success of modern exploration. The record of this early travel begins with the Bordeaux Pilgrims (332 A.D.) and during the next two centuries scores of others write out their observations of the Holy Land. But for a thousand years there is hardly a visitor who looks at the country save through the eyes of the monks.<sup>1</sup>



By the middle of the sixth century, the old "Holy Places" were covered by churches, while new ones were manufactured or discovered in dreams and relics of martyr's bones began to engross so much attention that no time was left in which to make any ordinary geographical or natural history. A little local color and a few facts in regard to the plan of early churches constitute almost the sum total of value to be gathered from the copious writings of many pilgrims between the sixth and twelfth centuries. There is not much more of value between the twelfth century and the time when the period of individual enterprise began. This was ushered in by Shaw and Prococke whom I have mentioned. Sietzen (1800) and Burckhardt (1810) made important observations and discoveries.

Edward Robinson, professor at Union Theological Seminary spent parts of two years in Palestine and in 1856 published three volumes of "Biblical Researches." He strictly employed the scientific method and his knowledge was extensive and minute. Few of his conclusions have been proved wrong, though they have been extensively amplified and improved.

However, on June 22, 1865, a momentous event occurred--momentous at least for the future of Palestinian exploration. Under the chairmanship of the Archbishop of York a group of men met in London and formally organized the Palestine Exploration Fund. With the foundation of this society the work of exploration took on an entirely new phase since here was a body of men, indeed specialists, backed by a fund sufficient for adequate investigation in each line of research and all working toward a common solution of a many sided problem.



The standard work that the Palestine Exploration Fund accomplished was the geographical survey of the land. This was done carefully and painstakingly, every valley and hill, every road and spring and even every cistern and well being noted and set down. Perhaps the greatest work of all however,<sup>2</sup> was the Topographical Survey (1881-86) accomplished for Judea and Samaria by Col. Conder, and for Galilee by Lord Kitchener, resulting in a great map of Western Palestine on a scale of one inch to a mile.

It would take a great deal too much space to go into all the details of the work of the Palestine Exploration Fund and that of other societies, fascinating as it is. Indeed parts of the history of these discoveries, the difficulties encountered--and mastered, read like a story book. Partly because of this, which of course made for popular interest, and partly so that subscribers to the fund might follow the record of the work being done, the Palestine Exploration Fund began to publish a "Quarterly Statement" and also established the "Society of Biblical Archaeology." Altogether more advance was made during these fifteen years from 1865-80, than in the fifteen centuries before!

However, from 1880-90 a much smaller amount of new material was added to the knowledge of Palestine though the advance in knowledge had been steadily increasing. One discovery made in 1880 has an amusing side. The Siloam stone was found, not by the brilliance of archaeologists but because of the inquisitiveness of a couple of boys! These boys had gone into the mouth of the tunnel which brought the water





from the Virgin spring into the interior of the city. Poking around on the walls they discovered marks which they reported and which were found to be an inscription made by the workmen who had cut the tunnel through the rock in the time of Hezekiah.<sup>3</sup>

Surface exploration can never become entirely obsolete and much of importance has been discovered through this method. Accurate topographical knowledge tends to a better understanding of Bible Narratives and the social life of the Hebrews. Nevertheless a new era began for the study of Palestine. Systematic excavation was finally begun under the leadership of Dr. Flinders Petrie who had already become famous through his work in Egypt.

Dr. Petrie was pre-eminently fitted for his job for he had just finished making his chronological scale of styles of pottery a year or two before. This gave him a working basis on which to begin at Tell el-Hesi. His findings and conclusions are invaluable. However, his stay was short and the next two years of scientific digging was conducted by Dr. F.G. Bliss, who substantiated Dr. Petrie's observations and more exactly fixed dates of occupation. "In a word," he says, "while the results of my long campaign were naturally far richer than those of Dr. Petrie's reconnoissance, they did not materially alter his conclusions."<sup>4</sup>

The next step was a series of excavations at Jerusalem, again conducted by Dr. Bliss, this time with the assistance of A.C. Dickie. Here was a new situation offering new problems. Here not only must the archaeologists guard against the con-



stant danger of confounding portions of buildings still standing with the similar material in which they were buried, and which, indeed, had once formed component parts thereof, but also they worked under the added disadvantage of attempting to dig in and near a richly populated town. Much of inestimable value was added to the general store of knowledge by this work.

During 1898-1900 important work was done by Bliss and Mcalister at several sites on the border land between Philistia and Judea, that is, along the Shephelah. There are differing opinions as to the real importance of this work. Peters,<sup>5</sup> definitely states that the results were disappointing, the choice of sites unfortuate and the whole affair ill-advised. Cobern, on the other hand seems to feel that much of value was confirmed and elaborated.

In 1902, J.P. Peters and Herman<sup>n</sup>/Tiersch discovered at Beit Jibrin an example of tomb painting entirely different from any other ever found in Palestine. The tomb was brilliantly painted with natural life and with dated inscriptions, the earliest being 196 B.C.

In northern Palestine Professor Sellin, sponsored by the Austrian government and Vienna Academy accomplished a great deal of digging in the short seasons of 1902-04. Also, at about the same time Dr. Shumacher under the auspices of the German Palestinian Society opened to the world that great commercial center of this region, Megiddo.

Next came the German Oriental Society excavations at Tell Hum, the problem of which will be dealt with in a later



chapter. Dr. Sellin, working with this same society in 1908-9 opened to view, the famous Jericho of Biblical history.

Central Palestine now came into its own. Samaria was excavated by the Harvard Expedition. It was a gigantic undertaking because of the large village of 800 population and the valuable crops which covered the hill. The value of this work was that it confirmed what was already known from written sources. Ain Shems in 1911-12 was visited by Dr. Mackenzie and though his campaign was short it was not valueless.

During the war years no activity of any great importance was carried on. Naturally much time was spent in evaluating the materials on hand, classifying and studying the data and trying to get a clear picture and a concise body of facts with which to work. Of course, no field work could be carried on but this very period of enforced inactivity in that line has shown itself to have been a boon--at least to science, for it gave men time to catch up the loose ends and when once the war was over they were ready to begin anew and on more solid footing.

In the meantime British civil government was established, after the war, in Palestine, and a Department of Antiquities was created in 1920, and put under the direction of John Garstang. Professor Garstang of the University of Liverpool appreciated the problems of the archaeologist and so was able to assist excavator<sup>s</sup> and to greatly ease their task.<sup>6</sup> No time was lost under his leadership in beginning excavations on behalf of the Palestine Exploration Fund. From now on there





began in the Holy Land a new spirit in archaeology.

In the British Mandate for Palestine was an article providing for the enactment of a Law of Antiquities and formulating the rules on which it should be based. This law is known as the Antiquities Ordinance. An antiquity discovered in Palestine after the date of the Antiquities Ordinance is the property of no one, but the Government has the right to acquire it on payment of its value to the finder; it cannot become private property unless the Government renounces this right with regard to it.

Any person discovering an antiquity is required to take reasonable measures to protect it and to give notice of discovery to the Department of Antiquities.<sup>7</sup> Thus the Department plus an international Archaeological Advisory Board which represents the various archaeological interests in Palestine controls but does not discourage discoveries. In fact excavations were now encouraged by the government and much interest was created. This had its drawbacks. Along with the responsible scholars and established museums came the collectors for private museums and selfish money gains. Likewise, students of questionable ability flocked to the Holy Land, some in the vain hope of making a name for themselves and some, motivated by religious convictions, seeking to "prove" the Bible. Always success brings with it undesirable elements. In spite of this, however, great and astonishing progress has been made.

One of the most important excavations since the war was at Beth-Shan under the direction of the University of



Pennsylvania Museum. The greatest amount of data here belongs to the realm of Old Testament study so, important as are the discoveries made here we shall not discuss them beyond this point.

The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago also carried on valuable work in this line in the excavation of Megiddo. Here the method of excavation makes for slow progress but calls for a thoroughness not always to be found in other methods employed.

The American School of Oriental Research has successfully completed several minor undertakings. In 1924 the American School began a series of Joint expeditions directed by Dr. Albright. The first of these was down at the southern end of the Dead Sea and in the land of Moab. The results of this and other expeditions convinced Dr. Albright that the very early Bible tradition that the Jordan Valley was very prosperous and densely peopled when Abraham came into the country, was correct.<sup>8</sup>

In 1926, '27, '29, '32, Dr. Bade conducted excavations at Tell en Nasbeh, discovering important data proving it the site of ancient Mizpah. The most remarkable discovery according to Albright, was the massive city wall which averages some seventeen feet in thickness and in one place reaches the width of twenty six feet.

The Palestine Exploration Fund has kept steadily at work from the time of its first entry into the field until the present date except for the enforced cessation of work during the war period. Much of value has been accomplished in Jerusalem



and its vicinity. Ophel hill is one of the more important sites.

German and Danish expeditionary parties have accomplished archaeological work of note. In fact the material for both of these countries, England, and ours, is so copious that this so very brief outline must of necessity leave out many names of vast interest and importance.

It must not be concluded from my outline that periods covered only by Biblical data are studied. Instead, there is a great deal of work being done to discover all that is possible of prehistoric times in Palestine and also what may be learned of Post-Biblical times.

Thus, modern research has profoundly changed old ideas of the distant past and has brought many new problems touching the development of ancient history and religion. In these the Bible naturally holds first place, though as I have noted, there is much being done to clarify our knowledge of Roman and Byzantine times and to add to our knowledge of prehistoric periods. However, the task of Biblical study is essentially that of placing the Book in the light of the continuously increasing store of knowledge which exploration and excavation have accumulated. This archaeological research has developed steadily from a thing of casual observation, through uncritical methods which destroyed a lot that was infinitely valuable, to an increasing exactness and careful, scholarly precision. Step by step we advance in knowledge, filling up the blank spaces and enlarging our information concerning other periods. Eventually every detail will find its niche as little by little



we are able to reconstruct the historical, cultural and geographical background of our Bible. Because of its central position and peculiar relationships to the rest of the world about it, discoveries in Palestine also possess a great value for the student of comparative civilization and world history.

It is not astonishing in a thing so young and so dramatic that the tendency should be today to ascribe greater value to the external evidence, that is, the results of these excavations and topographical surveys than to the Bible narratives themselves. The reason is plain. The differences of opinion of well known scholars as to the accuracy of the Bible story; discrepancies and contradictions in the Biblical narratives and the natural conviction that the last word must always lie with the ancient and contemporary data from the Bible lands themselves is argument enough. Accordingly, more and more, archaeology has become the science of the treatment of the material remains of the human past,<sup>9</sup> and we have come to place greater confidence in the findings and conclusions of archaeologists than in those of the textual critics, though both have their place.





## NOTES ON CHAPTER IV

- 1- Cobern, R.E.P., p. 28.
- 2- Ibid. p. 17.
- 3- Peters, B.S., p. 174.
- 4- Bliss, Tell El-Hesi Excavated, P.E.F.
- 5- Peters, B.S., p. 179.
- 6- Albright, A.P.B., p. 13f.
- 7- Luke-Keith-Roach, H.B.P., p. 86-87.
- 8- Albright, A.P.B., p. 48.
- 9- Cook, S.A., "Religion of Ancient Palestine in the Light of Archaeology," p. 17.



## CHAPTER V

## Sychar

One of the sites which has caused some of the greatest argument and study has been the problem of the location of John's Sychar. Without doubt it was near Shechem, but the question is: was it Shechem? Can it be identified with this city or was it another place but in the vicinity of Shechem?

Topographers and commentators are now pretty well agreed that St. John's Sychar is the modern Ain Askar, situated at the foot of Mount Ebal, about a mile from Nablus and rather less than a mile from Jacob's Well.<sup>1</sup> Thus Sanday introduces the problem with a decided statement. We may take it for granted, for the purposes of this paper, that Nablus is near the site of the ancient Shechem, since few scholars can be found to contradict this statement.

To start back of the point reached by Sanday's statement we may reason that if Nablus, with its never failing fountains, occupies the site of Shechem, it would seem to prove that Shechem was not the Sychar mentioned in the Fourth Gospel for it is incredible that the woman of Samaria would have gone away from those fine fountains to draw water out of a very deep well, no matter how fine the water of the latter might have been. Even at Ashar there is a fine spring so that if this was the ancient Sychar a problem still remains--the problem of why she should have been at this well at all. It has been suggested that the special sacredness and real excellence of the water had something to do with it. But



the most plausible explanation put forward was that by Dr. Trumbull; to the effect that the woman was not drawing water for her household but for the workmen employed in the adjacent fields.

With this solution temporarily disposing of this part of the problem, let us turn to a further discussion of the location of Sychar. Of course there have been those who have argued that Shechem and Sychar were one and the same. It has been urged by these writers that because of the hatred between the Jews and Samaritans the Jewish people ironically called Schechem "Shikhor" (drunken) or "Sheker" (false-hood). However, there is no evidence either in Josephus, the Targum, or the Talmud of their ever having done so--though argument from silence is no argument. The only support of the theory seems to be that Isaiah 28:1-3, referring apparently to the city of Samaria, denounces the drunkards (shikhorim) of Ephraim; and that the expression in Habakkuk 2:18, "a teacher of lies," contains an allusion to Moreh and Shechem. These interpretations are too forced and much too far-fetched, however. They cannot stand.

It is much more logical to take Sychar as a place in the vicinity of Shechem than to try by such methods to prove it was that city. Eusebius says Sychar was "before," that is "east" of Neapolis (Nabulus) which he distinguishes from Sychem--a place in its suburbs near Joseph's Tomb. Since Joseph's Tomb and Jacob's Well are near this would help to locate Sychar as Sychem. However, the Bordeaux Pilgrim makes a distinction between Neapolis, Sichem and Sichar. He





places the latter one Roman mile from Sichem.<sup>2</sup> Other pilgrims likewise separate it, referring apparently to el Askar as the olden Sychar. Robinson,<sup>3</sup> says that the fact that Askar starts with an Ain excludes all idea of affinity with the name Sychar. However, he may be wrong in this for there have been cases where the Aleph of the Hebrew has changed to an Ain. In the Samaritan chronicle, which cannot be later than the fourteenth century A.D., mention is made of a town apparently near Shechem that is called Ischar---merely a vulgar form of Sychar (?). The Samaritans in translating their chronicles into Arabic called this place Ashar. Thus the transition is traceable.<sup>4</sup>

It is interesting here to note that J.A. Montgomery distinctly feels that a case can satisfactorily be made out for the identification of Sychar with Shechem. He was writing some<sup>9</sup> twenty seven years ago, but Sir George Adam Smith, who comes<sup>9</sup> to a quite different and a generally more modern conclusion, decides quite differently. Montgomery<sup>5</sup> mentions the Bordeaux Pilgrim and Eusebius as writing of a Sychar distinct from Shechem but he quotes the solitary authority of Jerome who says that Sychar is a mistake for Shechem. He (Montgomery) feels that in this case Jerome's testimony is to be preferred before the others because he took the trouble to contradict and explain while the other two merely accepted a tradition without questioning. Likewise, he admits the possibility of an Arabic corruption of Sychar, yet he asks, "in its simple meaning of 'Askar' as a camp, may it not be the later Arabic translation of 'machna,' the name of the plain, which itself in Hebrew means a camp?"



The argument upholding Jerome is logical perhaps but it does not seem to me a very valid one. Usually in the cases of two against one the decision is for the side having the most proponents.

There are therefore, several points in favor of a Sychar distinct from Shechem. First, the evidence of these early Christian travellers already mentioned as well as others. Secondly, Lightfoot in his discussion of the Talmud says there is mentioned in it a place called Suchar, (or Sichar) a fountain of Suchar, and a plain of en Suchar, all of which may be identified with present sites. Thirdly, at the present day the name Askar, which may be a corruption of Sychar, is found in the neighborhood of Jacob's Well. The location of the place bears it out. Also, it is tempting to think that this is the village of the Fourth Gospel, even though the author does call it a 'city' which is manifestly impossible and may be a textual corruption, for it would show that the writer knew intimate detail and would also seem to show that the story was true.



## NOTES ON CHAPTER V

- 1- Sanday, S.S.G., p. 31.
- 2- Wilson, "Sychar," H.D.B., p. 635.
- 3- Robinson, "Later Researches," p. 133.
- 4- Conder, "Tent Work," p. 41.
- 5- Montgomery, "The Samaritans," p. 20f.



## CHAPTER VI

## Capernaum

One of the most important sites, and one about which there has been a momentous amount of argument is Capernaum. This city, from Biblical data at least, was apparently of great importance in the time of Jesus. Later, however, it possibly lost its pre-eminence for Josephus calls it only a village. The question as to the position of Capernaum is of vast importance to the Gospel story. "It is the pivot on which hinges the determination of the scene of the greater part of our Lord's active ministry."<sup>1</sup> Outside of the Gospels Capernaum is not mentioned in Scripture. This fact in itself throws a suggestive light upon the age of the city. Apparently it was a customs station and the residence of a high officer of the King,<sup>2</sup> and was occupied by a detachment of soldiers whose commander thought the good will of the people worth securing by building a temple<sup>3</sup> for them.

Two sites serve to divide the scholars into two warring factions and though a third site has been suggested it may be dismissed as hardly feasible.<sup>4</sup> Between Khan Minyeh, surrounded by several mounds with indistinguishable ruins, and Tell Hum, "a heap of black basalt ruins with the remains of a white limestone.<sup>5</sup> edifice and a curious tomb two miles and a half west, and two miles and a half from the mouth of the Jordan," the evidence is not quite conclusive. The arguments are many and the scholars numerous on both sides. In point of fact the derivation of the name has much to do in substantiating the arguments but since this discussion is striving to





deal more particularly with geographical factors we shall not go into great detail about the name. It may be sufficient to present as nearly an unbiased discussion as may be found.

The more correct spelling of the village name is Capernaum; now "Caphar" means "village," just as "Tell" means "hill;" and "Hum" may be taken to be a contraction for "Nahum," so that it would be obvious to suppose that "Nahum's village" simply passed into Nahum's hill."<sup>6</sup> Thomson<sup>7</sup> thinks that contraction is perfectly natural though he explains it somewhat differently. It is a common mode of curtailing old names by keeping only the final syllable, thus in this instance, he believes, Hum has been retained and Kefr dropped when Capernaum became a heap of ruins or tell.<sup>8</sup> What more natural, he reasons, than to call the place simply "Tell Hum"? It is also maintained, however, that "Tell Hum" is really a corruption of "Tanhum." The forms "Kefar Tanhum, Tanhumin and Tenhumin" are found in the Talmud.<sup>9</sup> This name may be comparatively recent, however. Also G.A. Smith refers to mediaeval documents showing that the Jews made pilgrimages to the tomb of "Nahum," which was without doubt at Capernaum.<sup>10</sup>

The case for Tell-Hum rests chiefly on the name, the size of the ruins, their position on the eastward road and the testimony of certain travellers. Any one of these may be at least temporarily disproven but when the whole array is brought forward the evidence is impressive.

Let us regard this evidence first. We have dealt briefly with the name; we shall now consider the ruins. There is a natural presumption in favor of Tell Hum from the fact



that the ruins are more important here than at Khan Minyeh and include the remains of a remarkable synagogue and some quite pretentious buildings. These would most naturally be found in a city of such importance as the Gospels picture Capernaum to have been. Cobern writes, "In April and May, 1905, the German Oriental Society excavated a Hebrew synagogue of the Roman period at Tell Hum. It was 78 feet long by 59 feet wide and was built of beautiful white limestone almost equal to marble in quality and was more magnificent in every way than any before found in Palestine. The roof was gable-shaped and surprisingly ornamented with fine carvings of animals, birds, fruits and other decorations."<sup>11</sup> The limestone was evidently quarried from the mountains to the north west where it is most abundant. The building is doubtless of the same date as those of the same kind in other places in Galilee but the workmanship, as I have mentioned previously, is of a much finer quality and a higher style. Below the synagogue, probably of the fourth century A.D. they found the floor of a still older building. This last, then, may be the synagogue built by the Roman centurion mentioned in Luke 12:5--if Tell Hum is indeed Capernaum.<sup>12</sup> In March, 1932, Dr. Mader, in behalf of the German Oriental Society excavated at Khirbet Minyeh, between Tiberias and Tell Hum. The excavations brought to light the remains of a Roman fort of square form, presumably from the early Byzantine period. These discoveries would seem to prove that another postulated site can no longer be regarded as a possibility for Capernaum.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the evidence of Josephus is usually quoted for Tell Hum,



though he is not always reliable, and in this case only adds to the perplexities, it seems. Josephus states that having been thrown from his horse in a skirmish with the Roman forces in the Jordan, he was carried to a village called Kepharnomon and from there to Taricheae. G.A. Smith, remarks,<sup>14</sup> "Even if this reading were correct, Josephus, with injuries so slight as he reports, might as easily have been carried the five miles to Gennesaret as the two and a half to Tell Hum, especially as his desire seems to have been to get to Taricheae." In the light of the gospel evidence it is suspicious, G.A. Smith thinks, that Josephus should call the place a village.

Christian and Jewish traditions are divided. Jerome places Capernaum two Roman miles from Chorazin. This evidence points at Tell Hum directly if Chorazin be Kerazeh. Theodosius, working from Magdala round the north end of the lake, places Capernaum two Roman miles on the other side of Heptapegon, presumably Ain et-Tabigah. The fact that the name means "seven springs" and there are only five at Ain et-Tabigah need be no hindrance to identifying them as one place. The so-called groups of "seven springs" were not meant to be taken literally. Seven is a sacred number and it only meant that the springs were more than usually strong and copious.<sup>15</sup>

Others whose testimony has been in favor of Tell Hum are Antonius Martyr (600) and John of Wurtzburg (1100).

Roads and communication is another factor of importance in locating an important site. For Tell Hum this much may be said--there was a highway which ran through it along which passed the caravans to and from the East; but the place was





not in touch with the great north and south traffic.<sup>16</sup>

There is one more bit of evidence for Tell Hum and this is both positive and negative. In January, 1907, Macalister and Masterman reported that they had made sufficient excavation at Khan Minyeh to prove that it was not the ancient Capernaum as it contained no pottery older than Arabian times. If this report were accepted then there would indeed be an undeniable argument for Tell Hum, for at the latter site were discovered pottery remains of the Roman period "exactly the period of the glory of Capernaum."<sup>17</sup> However, important Roman remains have been found between the ruined Khan and the sea, and considering that the Roman period covers a long period it is not an easy problem to prove whether the city at Tell Hum had or had not yet arisen in the time of Christ.

Though the list of scholars for Tell Hum is an impressive one Khan Minyeh can boast an equally impressive array of scholarly backers. These men of learning likewise claim Josephus on their side. If he seems at one place to point to Tell Hum as Capernaum, at another he favors Khan Minyeh. He favors the latter when he describes the plain of Gennesaret as watered by "a most copious fountain" called by the people of the country "Capharnaum." This may have been the Ain et-Tin, close by Khan Minyeh but more probably it was the Ain et-Tabighah, whose waters were conveyed in an aqueduct past the site of Khan Minyeh into the plain." Tell Hum on the other hand, has neither fountain nor spring.<sup>18</sup>

There is a still more telling point however, according to some, and that is the fact that Khan Minyeh can answer the



description of the Gospels as Tell Hum cannot. Also Arculf, another traveler, describes Capernaum as a narrow piece of ground between the mountain and the lake. This does not apply to Tell Hum, but it accurately fits the other contestant. Though other travelers witnessed to its position between the time of Arculf and that of Isac Chilo yet their testimony is either vague or definitely untrustworthy. Chilo, in 1334, says that Capernaum, then in ruins, had been inhabited by "Minim"--that is, Jewish converts to Christianity. The name Minyeh may have been derived from them some scholars think, but many objections were raised to this conclusion. Finally another derivation for the name was suggested. This derivation is through the older Arabic spelling "el-Munya" meaning "Hamlet."

It is difficult to summarize this chapter, for in one way the whole chapter is a brief of opposing opinions and interpretations. However, the following may be stated, I believe, with certainty. The strongest argument for Khan Minyeh is geographical: it is near the shore in the land of Gennesaret (if Gennesaret is el-Ghuweir), and is well located for a customs house, being on the highway from Jerusalem to Damascus. On the other hand, the strongest arguments for Tell Hum are the similarity of name and the extensive ruins. Though those who favor Khan Minyeh make light of the name argument they have a much harder time in answering the problem presented by the ruins of once magnificent buildings at Tell Hum. Furthermore, absence of Roman pottery remains at Khan Minyeh is a serious point against it.

There is another consideration also which has never been



satisfactorily answered. If Tell Hum is not Capernaum, what city or town does it represent? The ruins surpass in extent those of all other ancient sites around the lake except that of Tiberias. Unless we can make this identification we have here the remains of a very large and important town, which from its position, must have been in constant touch with the life and history of the district, and yet has left no trace.<sup>19</sup> The Talmudic Tanhum (Kephars Tanhum) might seem to be another plausible equivalent of the site, but Rabbinical testimony, as we have seen, identifies this with Capernaum itself.



## NOTES ON CHAPTER VI

- 1- Sanday, "Capernaum," D.C.G., p. 269.
- 2- Matthew, 9:9.
- 3- Matthew, 8:5; Luke 7:5.
- 4- Ewing, "Capernaum," H.D.B., p. 351.
- 5- G.A.S., says it was marble, but Macalister in later excavations declared it to be a fine quality of white limestone.
- 6- Sanday, S.S.G., p. 42.
- 7- Thompson, L.B., p. 430.
- 8- Christie, T.H.S.C., "Studia Semitica et Orientalia," p. 26.
- 9- Sanday, S.S.G., p. 43; cf. Neubauer, *Géographie du Talmud*, p. 221.
- 10- G.A.S., H.G.H.L., p. 455, see note at foot of page.
- 11- Cobern, "New Archaeological Discoveries," p. 366.
- 12- Barton, "Archaeology and the Bible," p. 98.
- 13- Report of N. Glueck reviewed by Albright, *Bul. A.S.O.R.*, February, 1933, p. 18.
- 14- G.A.S., "Capernaum," *Ency. Biblica*, Column 697.
- 15- Sanday, S.S.G., p. 40.
- 16- Ewing, *Capernaum*, I.S.B.E., p. 567.
- 17- P.E.F., cf., *Archaeological work in Palestined and Syria*  
During 1932, *Bulletin A.S.O.R.*, Feb. 1933, p. 15.  
cf., A.J.A. for 1933, Report by N. Glueck.
- 18- G.A.S., "Capernaum," *Ency. Biblica*, p. 679.
- 19- Christie, "T.H.S.C., "Studia Semitica et Orientalia," p. 29.





## CHAPTER VII

## Bethsaida

Unlike the subject of the foregoing chapter we have in Bethsaida a city mentioned many times in the Gospels and important in size and commerce. And yet, despite its importance no one can today point out with absolute certainty its exact location. If the arguments on the Tell Hum question have been lengthy, what term can be used for the arguments concerning the Bethsaida of the Gospels! Truly its location and importance and the question whether there were two or only one Bethsaida have been topics of absorbing interest.

However, it is beyond dispute that there was a Bethsaida somewhere to the east of the Jordan, near its entrance to the lake in the district of Lower Gaulonitis.<sup>1</sup> It was this city that Philip called by the name of Julias in honor of the daughter of Caesar.<sup>2</sup> The site was well chosen for to the east of the river is the rich alluvial plain made by the delta of the Jordan.

Bethsaida is mentioned seven times in the Gospels, once in Matthew and twice in each of the other three:—Mark, Luke and John. Matthew gives us no clue as to the geographical situation of the city, nor does Luke in the parallel denunciatory passage. (Matt. 11:12, Luke 10:13). However, in Luke<sup>3</sup> we learn that Jesus and the disciples departed into a desert place belonging to the city of Bethsaida. Mark, who after all is basic, being the earliest of the Synoptic Gospels has a different order,<sup>4</sup> and this has been the cause of most of the confusion.



While Luke describes Jesus and the disciples as going to a city called Bethsaida<sup>3</sup> where the Feeding of the Five Thousand took place, Mark describes the miracle of the feeding and then states that "straightway he constrained his disciples to enter into the boat and to go before him unto the other side to Bethsaida." And when they had done this they came "to the land of Gennesaret." Furthermore, while the apostles were experiencing such a storm on the lake, Mark reports that Jesus went up into a mountain to pray. This cannot be relied upon too much as it is a loose phrase used often in connection with Jesus, as indeed it was used for all the prophets. He may or may not have climbed a mountain.

The Fourth Gospel speaks of a "Bethsaida of Galilee" but this can of itself alone have little bearing on the problem. John does not mention Bethsaida in connection with the Feast but though his geography may be faulty his testimony is of some importance. The Feeding of the Five Thousand is the only one of Jesus' miracles that is recorded in all four gospels. Chapter six of the Fourth Gospel which contains the story is a unity within itself. Jesus crosses the sea of Galilee and he and his disciples "go up into a mountain" (6:3), which was grassy (6:10), and so evidently a pleasant place to sit. After they were fed the multitude sought to constrain Jesus to become their king. They probably had visions of him as Ruler and themselves never having to work for their livelihood yet always well fed through this wonderful power of His. But they had missed the point entirely and Jesus withdraws further up the mountain alone to pray. The disciples return in the boat.



Jesus later coming to them over the water just before they reach Capernaum.

There is moreover, another problem. Either John's geographical knowledge is surprisingly faulty or chapter six has been misplaced. According to the present arrangement John would have Jesus take ship from Jerusalem across the sea of Galilee. However, it may be that this chapter should naturally follow 4:54. This seems to be logical and to follow naturally the continuity of thought without violating the facts of geography. The conflicting accounts of these gospel passages which cannot be harmonized if each passage is to be interpreted freely has led many students to believe that in order to satisfy the Biblical data there must have been two Bethsaidas:- one, Bethsaida Julias near the mouth of the Jordan on the left bank of the river which had been enlarged and beautified by Herod Philip; the other a sort of harbor for Capernaum. Such a theory brings up again the problem of the site of Capernaum. If Capernaum were Khan Minyeh, then the two lay very close together and it would be natural to place this harbor on the little bay of et-Tabigha.

It is however coming to be more and more questioned whether it is really necessary to assume this second Bethsaida. Many scholars maintain that all the New Testament references may be applied to one place--Bethsaida Julias. The deduction that there must be another Bethsaida because of Mark 6:45, (already quoted earlier in this chapter) is due to a much too strict interpretation of that verse. The fact that the boat started for Bethsaida does not imply that it reached the place





and therefore does not make necessary a second Bethsaida near the Plain of Gennesaret. However, this in itself is a stumbling block. Jesus commands the disciples to go to Bethsaida, and they eventually arrive at the Plain of Gennesaret. If Bethsaida, then, is on the east coast, of which there can be little doubt they did not arrive at the place to which he had sent them.

This inconsistency may have been felt by Matthew, who drops out Bethsaida when he tells the story,<sup>5</sup>(Matt. 14:22). By leaving out this part he escaped the inference that Jesus could start for a place and allow a storm of which he was master to deflect him from his course.

Other "Gospel copyists" sensed this inconsistency, apparently, and made various modifications. Old Latin Manuscripts changed "from Bethsaida" into "To Bethsaida."

If Matthew deliberately omitted the name of Bethsaida because of inconsistency between intention and outcome he must be taken as one of the strongest witnesses against a western Bethsaida. If there had been a western Bethsaida there would have been no necessity for the change noted in the manuscripts, but if no western site was known it is possible that the copyists felt it necessary to make the story conform to known facts. Later copyists may not have recognized the difficulty or may not have dared to alter the text and so made more confusion by assuming a second Bethsaida. "Taking all account of Mark as it stands, there is no reason for supposing that Jesus may not have sent the disciples toward Bethsaida but that the storm blew them back and caused them to land at the Plain of Gennesaret."<sup>6</sup>

Though many scholars are in agreement concerning the





single city of Bethsaida yet each employs his own method of explaining away the contrary evidence. Dr. Furrer would use the phrase "Bethsaida of Galilee" in the Fourth Gospel to prove the second century origin of the gospel. The point there is, that according to Furrer, Josephus thought Galilee ended with the right bank of the Jordan, while Claudius Polemaeus in the second century, with Eusebius and Jerome, reckon Bethsaida Julias as belonging to Galilee. However, this is a very precarious assumption. John, writing after 84 A.D. would hardly have used the phrase "of Galilee" of a place only recently attached to that province, writing, as he was, at a distance from the scene and recalling the former conditions, unless indeed he knew little of history or Palestine geography. Furthermore Josephus is not here a safe guide, for Gamala, east of the lake, is twice described by him as being in Galilee.<sup>7</sup>

There is another element in this problem of an eastern Bethsaida and though it has no real bearing on the gospel story it is a point which is interesting to geographers and archaeologists. That is, the problem of the exact location of Bethsaida Julias. It is usually thought of as located at a small mound on the northern edge of the plain called et-Tell. It has also been suggested that the little fishing village on the shore was Old Bethsaida and the city at et-Tell was the location of Philip's castle. Too little evidence has been brought forth, either by means of archaeological discoveries or through scholarly study of literary remains to prove the exact position.

The point was urged that the site of et-Tell was too far



from the sea to have been a fishing village and Shumacher suggested that el-Araj, a "large completely destroyed site close to the lake" was the real location of Bethsaida Julias. This was the same site as that mentioned above. A third location has been suggested. That is el-Mesadiyeh, a ruin and winter village of Arab et-Tellawiyeh, which stands on an artificial mound about a mile and a half from the mouth of the Jordan.

In support of the single-city theory it is further argued that Jesus withdrew to Bethsaida as being in the jurisdiction of Philip, when he heard of the murder of John of Antipas, and would not have sought again the territories of the latter so soon after leaving them.<sup>8</sup> But it is not directly stated that Jesus came hither that he might leave the dangerous territory of Antipas and in view of Mark 6:30, and following, and Luke 9:10 and following, the inference from Matthew 14:13, that he did so is not warranted. All of which leaves us almost where we began. No trace of the name of Bethsaida has been found anywhere in the plain. Much more excavation will need to be done before it can be proved where Bethsaida Julias was located. Dr. Albright has come to a definite conclusion that et-Tell has nothing whatever to do with Bethsaida.<sup>9</sup> The latter, he believes is to be placed a short way east of the mouth of the Jordan, "probably at the eastern end of the natural terrace known as el-Araj,"<sup>10</sup> thus agreeing with Shumacher.

Et-Tell rests on a rounded hill which rises some fifty or sixty feet above a marshy plain, less than a mile east of the



Jordan, and about a mile and a half north of the lake.

During a visit there in the season of 1927-28, Dr. Albright and his party made a careful examination of the eastern and northern slopes of the hill finding only sherds of the Bronze and Arabic periods.<sup>11</sup> No Roman pottery being found, et-Tell cannot have been Bethsaida Julias. Thus again we can only marshal negative facts. This much can be safely stated, however, in accordance with the theories of the majority of scholars. There was only one Bethsaida, and that was Bethsaida Julias on the eastern side of the Jordan somewhere at the northern end of the Sea of Galilee.



## NOTES ON CHAPTER VII

- 1- Ewing, "Bethsaida," H.D.B.
- 2- Josephus, "Antiquities," XVIII, II, I.
- 3- Luke 9:10.
- 4- Mark 6:45.
- 5- C.C.M., P.S.B., J.P.O.S., 1930, p. 49.  
(Note: Nearly all of the textual discussion of this  
problem is taken from Dr. McCown's survey of the material)
- 6- Ibid.
- 7- Josephus, "Wars," IV, I.
- 8- Ewing, "Bethsaida," I.S.B.E., p. 452.
- 9- Albright, "Report," A.M.S.O.R. bulletin, Feb. 1928, p.2.f
- 10- Ibid.
- 11- Ibid.





## CHAPTER VIII

## Some Other Problem Sites of the Gospels.

We have reviewed in the last three chapters three distinct sites which have been problems for the archaeologist and geographer. In this chapter we shall endeavor to recount a few more places which have been the recipients of marked attention from those anxious to definitely locate the various places mentioned in the Bible narratives. The means by which these sites are located are principally three: through the persistence of ancient names (often through transitions and variations); by means of direct tradition (often set forth by ancient travellers or historians); by means of knowledge obtained through excavational activities; and, most important a synthesis and sifting of all of the available material by competent scholars.

In many cases the first mentioned item has made the following methods almost unnecessary. It is quite simple, for example, to identify Bethlehem with Bet Lahm; en-Nasira with Nazareth; and Nain is still Nain. Neither is it difficult to identify Kerazeh and Chorazin though Dr. Edward Robinson questioned whether they were one and the same.

This site is about two miles north of Tell Hum, located on a rocky bluff about eighty feet high that projects far out into the valley. If Tell Hum is Capernaum this data would agree with Jerome who said that Chorazin was two miles from Capernaum. The place commands a view of the lake and was from all appearances of much importance. The remains of olive presses indicate that the town was once encircled by



olive groves. Its chief public building was a synagogue which was large and was entered by a triple gateway.<sup>1</sup> The ruins are quite adequate to answer the descriptions of the Gospels, and what is even more important, there has evidently never been a rival site discovered.

Another instance of the preservation of an ancient name is supplied by the scene of the curing of the Gergesene demoniac. Across the lake from Tiberias on the eastern side the hills approach within forty or fifty feet of the shore and slope abruptly to the water making it barely possible for a frightened herd of swine to plunge headlong over the steep place referred to in the Gospel story.<sup>2</sup> At the mouth of the Wady Semak are the ruins of Kersa. There is little doubt that this was Gergesa, for the cliffs described are the only ones where such an event could have been located. Much discussion has been aroused over the variant reading. Mark reads "Gadarenes" but the oldest and best Greek manuscripts have instead "Gerasenes." In Luke 8:26,37, the best reading also seems to be "Gerasenes." Sanday feels that Gadarenes is a later gloss.<sup>3</sup> The ruins indicate that Gergesa was a small village, surrounded by a wall three feet thick. On the hillsides which rise immediately above the town are ancient tombs and it is here that Jesus may have met the maniac.

Cana, the scene of another and the first miracle of the Fourth Gospel has been no more decisively located than many others. The only Biblical evidence that can be brought forth is that it lay higher than Capernaum (John 2:12), and that it is in Galilee. Tradition and present opinion are divided



between modern Kefr Kenna about three and three quarter miles north east of Nazareth, and Khirbet Kana, about eight miles north of Nazareth. This last has a pool, cisterns, a few tombs and some ruins. The site overlooks a plain, quite marshy in spring. Should this be the place the Hebrew meaning of the name "place of reeds," would be most appropriate.<sup>4</sup>

Kefr Kenna occupies rising ground on the southern edge of Sahl Toran. The doubling of the "n" is against the identification of this town with ancient Cana. Also, there are at this place no reeds nor marsh for miles around so that even should the name be traced and all other conditions complied with--yet the name would not be applicable.<sup>5</sup> Khirbet Kana on the northern edge of the plain Dr. Albright believes is most certainly the Cana of the New Testament and Josephus, in accordance with the tradition of the Crusaders; Kefr Kenna has no valid evidence in its favor, he feels, aside from the modern tradition.<sup>6</sup> On one visit there he found Hellenistic and Roman sherds on the summit above the ruins of the Arab village of the middle ages. This was conclusive evidence that this site was Cana of Galilee.<sup>7</sup>

Another site about which there is a question is the site of Magdala. The name appears only in Matthew 15:39, for in the parallel passage in Mark 8:10 its place is taken by Dalmanutha. It may be therefore that these places were contiguous, rather than, as certain scholars have thought, that there is corruption or misreading in the text. However, this is merely a guess. The existence of a Galilean Magdala is rendered certain by the naming of Many Magdalene and by the





testimony of Jewish writers.<sup>8</sup> In spite of the fact that it was a place of some wealth according to the Talmud, neither Josephus, Eusebius nor Jerome mention it. Some have sought to locate this once fine city at the place where there is now a miserable little village with some indications of ancient ruins both of walls and foundations. This is the modern el-Mejdel on the lake in the south eastern corner of the plain of Gennesaret.

Another village whose location has been in question is that of Emmaus. According to Luke it is sixty furlongs from Jerusalem. In the Onomasticon it is placed at Emmaus Nicopolis at the foot of the Judean hills. But this is too far although some manuscripts are to be found which read 160 furlongs for sixty. This is impossible according to the rest of the story, for it would make the two disciples walk forty miles in the one day with time out for discourse and eating. The only way by which it can be read 160 furlongs is to say that Luke 24:30, is the beginning of a new chapter on another day. This, however, is not likely.

Emmaus has been identified with el-Kubebeh. But the tradition which identifies this with the village of the resurrected Lord does not begin until the fourteenth, or at the earliest the twelfth century.<sup>9</sup>

However, Josephus speaks of an Emmaus, thirty stadia from Jerusalem,<sup>10</sup> the habitation of a colony of soldiers belonging to Titus. The direction is unknown but a clue may be found in the name Kulonieh. This name means colony, and Emmaus may be here surviving under an Arabic transliteration of the Latin 'Colonia.'

Thompson,<sup>11</sup> feels very strongly that "assuredly it was





not the Emmaus of the New Testament," though I cannot discover his reason for being so decided. In the excavations of 1924-'25, the Dominicans discovered the oldest Christian Church known in the world.<sup>12</sup> This church was at Amwas, the most probable site for Emmaus. The first excavations at this place were shortly after the year 1875, but not until 1924, was the work completed.

There has been little evidence to cause commentators to question the Bible statement that Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judah. Both Matthew and Luke emphasize the location of Bethlehem. And yet, in spite of this testimony the question remains, however dormant it may be, as to whether the village we commonly think of as his birth place is indeed correct. It is true that Christian tradition from the earliest times points to Bethlehem and is confirmed by Justin Martyr, describing the scene of the birth as in a cave near the village. It is also true that the geography of the situation fits the story.

Nevertheless, there are other facts to be remembered. Bethlehem of Judah was the Bethlehem of David and it was from this city that a leader should come. What more natural then, that when a great leader did arise, tradition should place the scene of his birth in Bethlehem?

Furthermore, there is another Bethlehem. This second one is in Galilee about seven miles west of Nazareth. It has been suggested that this may have been the true birth-place but tradition has transferred it to the better known city.

On the other hand we must not forget that after all we have strong arguments in the Gospels themselves for the



southern city. Matthew and Luke being independant of each other and differing in many respects, yet agree in this particular and therefore, probably represent two distinct traditions.<sup>13</sup>



## NOTES ON CHAPTER VIII

- 1- Kent, B.G.H., p. 251.
- 2- Ibid. p. 255.
- 3- Sanday, S.S.G., p. 26.
- 4- Ewing, "Cana," I.S.B.E., p. 548.
- 5- Ibid.
- 6- Albright, "A Tour on Foot through Samaria and Galilee.  
A.S.O.R., bulletin, Sept. 1921.
- 7- Albright, "Report," A.S.O.R., buletin, Oct, 1923.
- 8- G.A.S., "Magdala," Ency. Biblica, Column 2895.
- 9- Sanday, S.S.G., p. 30.
- 10- Sanday, (S.S.G., p. 31) says that though some mss. of  
Josephus read sixty furlongs, the best mss.  
reads only thirty furlongs. cf., Wars, VII, VI.
- 11- Thompson, L.B., p. 59.
- 12- Albright, Bulletin of A.S.O.R., Dec. 1925, p. 12.
- 13- Sanday, S.S.G., p. 25.



## CHAPTER IX

## Conclusions for the Practical User.

Palestine is a land of ruins, of legends, of tradition. What does it profit us to know the exact location of any specific place when we have tradition to build upon--often times much more satisfactory to the layman than the dissappointingly unromantic facts. And yet it is important that we know as far as possible the truth of every story. These places are but external helps, symbols, if you please, which we use to bring home to our minds something spiritual and intangible.

Geography has an important place among the sciences. It is no longer regarded, as it was a couple of decades ago, as simply a description of the earth's surface, but today it is studied as the very foundation of all historical study. Geography no longer means topography alone but must also include climate, geographic relationships, internal and external, and many other factors. Kent,<sup>1</sup> writes, "Hence, in its deeper meaning, geography is a description of the divine character and purpose expressing itself through natural forces, in the physical contour of the earth, in the animate world, and, above all, in the life and activities of man." Thus the geography of the Bible is important in the extreme, for through the plains and mountains, the desert and the ravines the Eternal spoke to the Hebrews who were in turn keenly alive to this voice speaking to them through nature. One reason why we must study Palestinian geography and customs is because the Bible abounds in references which





without knowledge of the country it is impossible to understand or to interpret correctly.

It has long been known that the Gospel narrative and the sermons of Jesus lose many of their most beautiful meanings to one unfamiliar with the natural scenery and native customs of Palestine. The language of Jesus, his illustrations and figures of speech, all show the influence of His surroundings.

Much deeper than this is the undoubted fact of the psychological influence of these surroundings upon the disciples and upon Jesus. Only by a freak of imagination can it be supposed that an historical personality becomes conscious of the fact of its own inner light by conceptions other than those in which the thought of the age in general finds expression.<sup>2</sup> Thus Jesus born in Spain or China would have assumed another character than did Jesus of Nazareth, of Galilee.

Naturally we must here take the middle path. If we side with those who declare that climate and topography have no real effect upon the nature of the culture and civilization, much of value will be overlooked and much mis-interpreted through lack of complete understanding. If, on the other hand, we sway with Ellsworth Huntington entirely on the side of geographic and climatic determinism we are apt to draw conclusions that cannot be substantiated in fact. The middle path is the wisest and the most apt to be correct.

Geography certainly has a decided effect upon the civilization of a given area, but it does not determine, though it may condition the direction and limit the develop-



ment. Morals and religion cannot be the results or products of physical, external conditions. However, no one who has spent time studying that peculiar little country, Palestine, can fail to believe that its physical features must have undoubtedly had a great influence upon the Hebrew mind.

All this I am inclined to consider from the viewpoint rather of the teacher than of the student. It may be because I have myself suffered--and, as I recall it now, caused others to suffer under my tutelage, in attempting to learn Bible geography. It is true that children of grade school age need and demand definite facts. They are explorers but they want their explorations to end in a concrete, decisive manner. For this age then we must stay away from moot questions of location and date. There is certainly a wealth of material open to them without venturing upon uncertain ground.

An older group, however, is of a different turn of mind. They delight in problems whose solutions are still unreached and in whose study they themselves can reach conclusions based on personal study. To them we are all too often trying to teach the same material as to their grade school brothers and sisters. The Church's excuse has been--"if we allow a doubt to creep in soon they will doubt everything and our authority will be lost." Oh, how blind we have been! Instead of making the geography of the gospels a living, dynamic thing--a challenge to the mind, to the thinking powers of youth, we sit back and calmly hand out a chronological table of the villages Jesus visited and expect the young people to memorize it and be interested.



On the face of it our method is wrong and the sooner we make the study of the Bible a challenge and not a dead, concluded subject without the possibility of new development and clearer understanding, the sooner our young people will find in the Bible a book of mental inspiration. After the mental uplift will come the spiritual. But we cannot expect to appeal to the questioning spirit of youth with anything less than that which can be an outlet for that desire, to find out for themselves and prove their powers.

And how does this tie up with the geography of the gospels? Simply in this way--here is a chapter of Bible study that is still being written. Oh yes, the introduction is finished and the facts are there but they have not all been discovered and marshalled in order. Archaeology may deal with the dead and their past but Archaeology is itself an adventure. The facts of which we are now in ignorance lie waiting in the soil of Palestine for the explorer to bring to light. This is a dramatic thing ready to the hand of the enlightened teacher. And that is not all. Buried in the soil of Biblical literature lie facts yet undiscovered, or if discovered, yet unrelated to the great problem of understanding the social history and ideals of the Hebrew nation.

Here is no lack of materials--either natural or literary. Instead here is a wealth of facts waiting only to be marshalled and synthetized. The literary problems are almost exclusively the province of the trained scholar but to the amateur are offered worlds to conquer in the line of under-



standing economic, social and religious institutions, of recognizing the cultural advance of the Hebrew as he achieved independence of his unique environment.





## NOTES ON CHAPTER IX

- 1- Kent, B.G.H., Preface.
- 2- Hausrath, "History of New Testament Times quoted from  
D.C.G. article by Ewing on Palestine.







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